

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An information management system for tracking medical instruments, comprising:

at least one antimicrobial treatment device for reducing microbial contamination of a medical instrument by means of at least one treatment agent;

at least one instrument tracking client, each instrument tracking client installed on a respective general purpose computer, said at least one instrument tracking client assigning (1) a device identifier to each of the antimicrobial treatment devices and (2) a load identifier for identifying medical instruments treated together using a first antimicrobial treatment process;

~~at least one antimicrobial treatment device; and~~

a communication server interface in bi-directional communication with the at least one instrument tracking client and the at least one antimicrobial treatment device, said communication server interface programmed to:

request data from the at least one antimicrobial treatment device by transmission of a command from the communication server interface to the at least one antimicrobial treatment device,

transmit requests from the at least one instrument tracking client,

receive first data from the at least one antimicrobial treatment device,

receive requests from the at least one instrument tracking client, said requests including (1) the device identifier and (2) the load identifier, and

transmit data to the at least one instrument tracking client.

2. (original) An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said communication server interface includes a communication server installed on a general purpose computer system.

3. (original) An information management system according to claim 2, wherein said communication server is implemented as at least one of a Component Object Model (COM), a COM+, and a Distributed Component Object Model (DCOM).

4. (original) An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said system further comprises a computer network for connecting said respective general purpose computer system with said communication server interface.

5. (original) An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said antimicrobial treatment device is selected from the group consisting of: a sterilizer and a washer.

6. (currently amended) A communication server interface in bi-directional communication with at least one instrument tracking client and at least one antimicrobial treatment device for reducing microbial contamination by means of at least one treatment agent, said communication server interface comprising:

means for requesting data from the at least one antimicrobial treatment device by transmission of a command from the communication server interface to the at least one antimicrobial treatment device,

means for transmitting requests from the at least one instrument tracking client,

means for receiving first data from the at least one antimicrobial treatment device,

means for receiving requests from at least one instrument tracking client, wherein said request includes (1) a device identifier for identifying at least one antimicrobial treatment device and (2) a load identifier for identifying medical instruments being treated together using a first antimicrobial treatment process, and

means for transmitting data to the at least one instrument tracking client.

7. (original) A communication server interface according to claim 6, wherein said communication server is installed on a general purpose computer system.

8. (original) A communication server interface according to claim 6, wherein said communication server interface is connected with said at least one instrument tracking client and said at least one antimicrobial treatment device via a computer network.

9. (original) A communication server interface according to claim 6, wherein said antimicrobial treatment device is selected from the group consisting of: a sterilizer and a washer.

10. (currently amended) An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said at least one antimicrobial treatment device responds to said command by transmission of said first data from said at least one antimicrobial treatment device to said communication server interface.

Claim 11 (canceled)

12. (currently amended) A communication server interface according to claim 6, wherein said at least one antimicrobial treatment device responds to said command by transmission of said first data from said at least one antimicrobial treatment device to said communication server interface.

Claim 13 (canceled)